



Studies in the News for



Children and Families Commission

Contents This Week

IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

[Investing in PreK thru 3rd Education.](#)

[Impacts of Early Childhood Programs.](#)

[Media and Young Children's Learning.](#)

[Preschool Matters.](#)

[The Serious Need for Play.](#)

[Preschoolers' Early Literacy Development.](#)

IMPROVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING

[Budgeting for Basic Needs.](#)

[Young children's physical activity.](#)

[Supporting Young Children and Families.](#)

[Role of Preschool Home-Visiting Programs.](#)

[Parenting and Preschool Child Development.](#)

IMPROVED HEALTH

[Children's Environmental Health.](#)

[Growing Up in North America](#)

[A Survey of Pediatricians' Attitudes.](#)

IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF CARE

[Promoting Health and Preventing Injury in Preschool Children.](#)

[The Child Development Index.](#)

CONFERENCES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

[Innovation in Action Series](#)

Introduction to Studies in the News

Studies in the News: Children and Family Supplement is a service provided to the First 5 California Children and Families Commission by the California State Library. The service features weekly lists of current articles focusing on Children and Family policy. Prior lists can be viewed from the California State Library's Web site at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/ccfc/>.

How to Obtain Materials Listed in SITN:

- When available on the Internet, the URL for the full-text of each item is provided.
- California State Employees may contact Information Resources & Government Publications at (916-654-0081; csinfo@library.ca.gov).
- All other interested individuals should contact their local library - the items may be available there, or may be borrowed by your local library on your behalf.

The following studies are currently on hand:

IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The Case for Investing in PreK thru 3rd Education: Challenging Myths about School Reform. By Rima Shore, Director of Adelaide Weismann Center.
(Foundation for Child Development, New York, New York) January 2009. 12 p.

Full text at: http://www.fcd-us.org/usr_doc/TheCaseForInvesting-ChallengingMyths.pdf

[“In recent years, a convergence of research from several disciplines has shown that early learning matters, and increasingly, policymakers have gotten the message. Too often, however, educational decision makers have bought into the myth that they can guarantee later achievement by investing in good programs for four-year-olds. In fact, high-quality Prekindergarten programs have been shown to benefit children, boosting the kinds of learning and thinking skills that are needed for later achievement. But researchers have long known that without sustained follow-up, these gains fade in the elementary grades.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

Impacts of Early Childhood Programs. By Julia B. Issacs, Brookings Institution. (The Institution, Washington, D.C.) September 2008. 30 p.

Full text at:

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2008/09_early_programs_isaacs/09_early_programs_isaacs.pdf

[“Policy-makers nationwide are building on the consensus among researchers and business leaders alike that children who are nurtured from their earliest stages of development have the best chances of achieving life-long success. Whether the objective is reducing crime, increasing high school graduation rates, or providing children with an equal shot at the American Dream, evidence shows that effective early investments can make a real difference by starting children off on the right foot.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

Media and Young Children’s Learning. By Heather L. Kirkorian, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and others. IN: The Future of Children, vol. 18, no. 1 (Spring 2008) pp. 39-61.

Full text at: http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/18_03_Kirkorian.pdf

[“Electronic media, particularly television, have long been criticized for their potential impact on children. One area for concern is how early media exposure influences cognitive development and academic achievement. Heather Kirkorian, Ellen Wartella, and Daniel Anderson summarize the relevant research and provide suggestions for maximizing the positive effects of media and minimizing the negative effects.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

Preschool Matters: A Publication of the National Institute of Early Education Research. (The Institute, New Brunswick, New Jersey) November/December 2008. 12 p.

Full text at: <http://nieer.org/psm/pdf/63.pdf>

[This publication contains the following articles: 1.) British Research Confirms Benefits of Preschool for All; 2.) Federal Pre-K Curriculum Study Shows Few Stand-Outs; 3.) Even Start Study Shows CLIO Intervention has Limited Effects; 4.) Pre-K Expansion a Rough Go; 5.) Richard J. Haier: Reading Young Minds to Unlock Their Possibilities; 6.) Giving Play its Due; 7.) Wanted: Guidance on those A-Words- Assessment and Accountability; and, 8.) Insight into Preventing Childhood Obesity.]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

“The Serious Need for Play.” By Melissa Wenner, Free –Lance Writer for Scientific American. IN: Scientific American (January 2009) pp-1-5.

Full text at: <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=the-serious-need-for-play>

[“Most psychologists agree that play affords benefits that last through adulthood, but they do not always agree on the extent to which a lack of play harms kids—particularly because, in the past, few children grew up without ample frolicking time. But today free play may be losing its standing as a staple of youth. According to a paper published in 2005 in the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, children’s free-play time dropped by a quarter between 1981 and 1997. Concerned about getting their kids into the right colleges, parents are sacrificing playtime for more structured activities. As early as preschool, youngsters’ after-school hours are now being filled with music lessons and sports—reducing time for the type of imaginative and rambunctious cavorting that fosters creativity and cooperation.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

"Accelerating Preschoolers' Early Literacy Development Through Classroom-Based Teacher-Child Storybook Reading and Explicit Print Referencing." By Laura M Justice, Ohio State University, and others. IN: Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools, vol. 40, no. 1 (January 2009) pp. 67-85.

Full text at:

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=35866697&site=ehost-live>

["Purpose: This study examined the impact of teacher use of a print referencing style during classroom-based storybook reading sessions conducted over an academic year. Impacts on preschoolers' early literacy development were examined, focusing specifically on the domain of print knowledge. Method: This randomized, controlled trial examined the effects of a print referencing style on 106 *preschool* children attending 23 classrooms serving disadvantaged preschoolers. Following random assignment, teachers in 14 classrooms used a print referencing style during 120 large-group storybook reading sessions during a 30-week period. Teachers in 9 comparison classrooms read at the same frequency and with the same storybooks but used their normal style of reading. Results: Children whose teachers used a print referencing style showed larger gains on 3 standardized measures of print knowledge: print concept knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and name writing, with medium-sized effects. Clinical Implications: The convergence of the present findings with those of previous efficacy studies indicates that

print referencing intervention can be used confidently as an approach for facilitating print knowledge in *preschool*-age children. Speech-language pathologists can serve an important role in supporting *preschool* educators as they use this evidence-based technique with pupils in their classrooms." **NOTE: An electronic copy of this article can be obtained by request from the CA State Library.]**

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

IMPROVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Budgeting for Basic Needs: A Struggle for Working Families. By Kinsey Alden Dinan, National Center for Children in Poverty. (The Center, New York, New York) February 2009. 12 p.

Full text at: http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_858.pdf

[“Millions of parents find themselves struggling to make ends meet, despite hard work. Even a full-time job is no guarantee of economic security, with the high cost of everyday expenses and a federal minimum wage of just \$6.55 an hour – less than \$14,000 a year with full-time, year-round employment.

The Basic Needs Budgets developed by the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) show the cost of basic day-to-day necessities for families with children. Using examples from these bare-bones budgets, this brief examines the question of how much families need to get by and provides insight into the struggles that working families face. Examples are drawn from 12 localities and are based on families with two children; budgets for other family types and localities are available through NCCP’s Basic Needs Budget Calculator.]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

What do parents and preschool staff tell us about young children's physical activity: a qualitative study. By Genevieve M. Dwyer, Children’s Hospital of Westmead, Australia, and others. IN: International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, vol. 5, no. 66 (December 2008) pp. 1-11.

Full text at: <http://www.ijbnpa.org/content/5/1/66>

[“Physical activity and small screen recreation are two modifiable behaviours associated with childhood obesity and the development of chronic health problems. Parents and preschool staff shape behaviour habits in young children. The aims of this qualitative study were to explore the attitudes, values, knowledge and understanding of parents and carers of preschool-age children in relation to physical activity and small screen recreation and to identify influences upon these behaviours.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

Supporting Young Children and Families: An Investment Strategy that Pays. By Julia B. Issacs, Brookings Institution. (The Institution, Washington, D.C.) Winter 2008. 5 p.

Full text at:

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/articles/2008/winter_children_families_isaacs/winter_children_families_isaacs.pdf

[“In the United States, public investment in children typically does not begin until they are age five or six and enter a public school system. Until that time, we regard the care of young children as the almost exclusive domain of parents, relying on them to provide an environment that will promote healthy physical, intellectual, psychological, and social development. Good care early in life helps children to grow up acquiring the skills to become tomorrow’s adult workers, caregivers, taxpayers, and citizens. Yet today, many parents are stretched thin, in both time and money, trying to care for their young children, while early in their own careers. Parents across the socioeconomic spectrum struggle to balance both their children’s developmental needs and the demands of their employers.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

The Role of Preschool Home-Visiting Programs in Improving Children’s Developmental and Health Outcomes. By the Council on Community Pediatrics. IN: *Pediatrics*, vol. 123, no. 2 (February 2009) pp. 598-603.

Full text at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/123/2/598>

[“Child health and developmental outcomes depend to a large extent on the capabilities of families to provide a nurturing, safe environment for their infants and young children. Unfortunately, many families have insufficient knowledge about parenting skills and an inadequate support system of friends, extended family, or professionals to help with or advise them regarding child rearing. Home-visiting programs offer a mechanism for ensuring that at-risk families have social support, linkage with public and private community services, and ongoing health, developmental, and safety education.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

"Parenting and Preschool Child Development: Examination of Three Low-Income U. S. Cultural Groups." By Leanne Whiteside-Mansell, University of Arkansas, and others. IN: *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1 (February 2009) pp. 48-60.

["We examined the impact of parenting behaviors on preschool children's social development in low income families from three cultural groups: European American (n=286), African American (n=399), and Hispanic American (n=164) using Spanish as the primary language in the home. Observed parenting behaviors of stimulation, responsivity, and acceptance of the child in European American and African American families showed positive impacts on children's social development with notable exceptions discussed. Corporal punishment had a negative impact on children's social development. With the exception of corporal punishment, none of the parenting behaviors predicted social development outcomes for Hispanic children. **"NOTE: This journal is available for loan from the California State Library or a hard copy of the article can be requested from the library."**]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

IMPROVED HEALTH

“Children's Environmental Health: An Under-Recognised Area in Pediatric Health Care.” By Tania G. Gavidia, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia, and others. IN: BMC Pediatrics, vol. 9, no. 10 (February 6, 2009) pp. 1-8.

Full text at: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2431-9-10.pdf>

["The knowledge that the environment in which we live, grow and play, can have negative or positive impacts on our health and development is not new. However the recognition that adverse environments can significantly and specifically affect the growth and development of a child from early intrauterine life through to adolescence, as well as impact their health later in adulthood, is relatively recent and has not fully reached health care providers involved in pediatric care.

Over the past 15 years, world declarations and statements on children's rights, sustainable development, chemical safety and most recently climate change, have succeeded in cultivating a global focus on children's health and their right to a healthy environment. Many international calls for research in the area, have also been able to identify patterns of environmental diseases in children, assess children's exposures to many environmental toxicants, identify developmental periods of vulnerability, and quantify the cost benefits to public health systems and beyond, of addressing environmentally related diseases in children. Transferring this information to front-line health care providers and increasing their awareness about the global burden of disease attributed to the environment and children's especial vulnerability to environmental threats is the salient aim of this commentary.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

Growing Up in North America: Child Health and Safety in Canada, United States, and Mexico. By the Anne Casey Foundation. (The Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland) 2009. 63 p.

Full text at: http://www.childreninnorthamerica.org/TriHealth_English_final.pdf

[“Representatives from the Canadian Council on Social Development, Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en Mexico (The Children’s Rights Network in Mexico), and the Anne E. Casey Foundation have come together to create the *Children in North America Project* based on our shared interest in the well-being of all children. We recognize that Canada, Mexico, and the United States have common bonds and challenges in ensuring that our children grow up health, not just because of geography but also because of increasing economic, social, and cultural interaction.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

“A Survey of Pediatricians' Attitudes Regarding Influenza Immunization in Children.” By Daniel J. Levy and others, Child and Teen Wellness Center. IN: BMC Pediatrics, vol. 9, no. 8 (January 30, 2009) pp. 1-17.

Full text at: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2431-9-8.pdf>

[“The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices advocates that influenza immunization is the most effective method for prevention of illness due to influenza. Recommendations for vaccination of children against influenza have been revised several times since 2002, and as of 2008 include all children 6 months to 18 years of age. Nevertheless, influenza immunization rates have remained low. We surveyed practicing pediatricians in Maryland in the spring of 2007 to determine their attitudes and practices toward childhood influenza immunization....

Vaccination was reported to occur at multiple types of patient encounters, as recommended. Survey respondents stated that practice-based immunization was not a profitable service. Pediatricians were supportive of school-based immunization programs, and more than half stated they would be actively involved in such programs. School-based programs may be critical to achieving high vaccination coverage in the school-aged population.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF CARE

“Promoting Health and Preventing Injury in Preschool Children: The Role of Parenting Stress.” By Sonia A. Alemagno, University of Akron Institute for Health and Social Policy, and others. IN: Early Childhood Research & Practice, vol. 10, no. 2 (Fall 2008) pp. 1-6.

Full text at: <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v10n2/alemagno.html>

[“There is concern that parents under stress may not be effective in promoting health and preventing injury in young children, but research in this area has been limited. To explore this issue, a study was conducted to look at the relationship between self-reported parenting stress and actions taken to promote health and to prevent injury in preschool-age children. The study was conducted in collaboration with 15 Head Start programs in northeast Ohio. Five hundred thirty-one parents or guardians of children in the program completed a 10-minute survey on health and injury prevention administered through a “talking” laptop computer. This study presents new data linking parenting stress to the decreased likelihood of preventive measures being in place to reduce injury and illness risk in preschool children. Parents under stress may need social support and ways to develop a working support network to help prevent injury to young children and ensure the delivery of appropriate medical care. Early childhood caregivers and educators may have useful roles to play in such support networks.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

The Child Development Index: Holding Governments to Account for Children’s Well Being. By Sarah Hague, Save the Children UK. (Save the Children, London, England) 2008. 30 p.

Full text at: <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/child-development-index.pdf>

Chart pack at: http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/child-development-index_data2008.xls

[“Political leaders and economic policy-making and analysis generally devote too little attention to the distributional effects of economic growth. This oversight is particularly pronounced when it comes to children. It is generally still assumed that increases in household income will improve wellbeing, and that these improvements will benefit all family members, including children, to the same extent. Our report challenges this assumption. We have developed the first ever global, multidimensional tool that enables us to monitor how individual countries are performing in relation to the wellbeing of their children – the Child Development Index. The Index will help to ensure that governments are held to account for the impact of their policies and priorities on children.”]

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

CONFERENCES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Innovation in Action Series Begins March 12 at 5:30 p.m.: Healthy Homes, Healthy Kids

Innovation in Action is an ongoing series of Center Scene Public Programs that highlights successful and replicable programs that use creativity and partnership to find new solutions to old problems and build healthier communities in tough times.

Upcoming Events in this Series:

Healthy Homes, Healthy Kids

Thursday, March 12 at 5:30 p.m.

The California Endowment's Center for Healthy Communities

1000 N. Alameda St.

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Information at: <http://www.calendow.org/article.aspx?id=3780>

Every year, tens of thousands of people in the City of Los Angeles are living in extreme slum housing, and it's making them sick. Unsatisfied with the traditional response to this public health crisis, three nonprofit organizations teamed up to break the cycle of illness and injustice and formed a coalition that has achieved unprecedented results in the fight for healthy homes and healthy kids.

Join us for a panel discussion with these pioneering nonprofit leaders and learn about how they've made kids healthier by taking a new approach to an old problem and working with unlikely partners toward a common goal.

[\[Back to Top\]](#)